

SPRING • 2007

# Veterans' Health

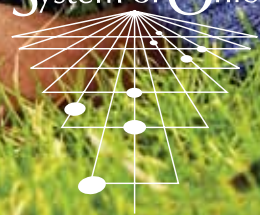
THE WELLNESS MAGAZINE  
FOR OHIO VETERANS

Working  
together for  
your health



He walked off  
100 pounds!

VA Healthcare  
System of Ohio





## To our readers



Spring is in the air! What better way to celebrate the end of winter than by heading outdoors for a walk in the fresh air?

In this issue, we'll share the story of Cleveland veteran David "T-Bird" Dundr. Last year, Dundr walked more than 2,800 miles in an effort to lose weight, and it worked: He lost 112 pounds in 10 months. To learn more about how you can lose weight and follow a healthy diet, turn to page 6.

At VA Healthcare System of Ohio, we want to partner with you in your healthcare. On pages 4 and 5, we give you tools to help you learn to manage your health and make shared decisions in your care. If you're living with a chronic disease such as diabetes, high blood pressure or heart disease, don't miss this article!

On page 3, we share news about the new veteran ID cards and how to sign up for My HealthVet. Visit our Web site [www.visn10.va.gov](http://www.visn10.va.gov) for more information. Best wishes for a safe and healthy spring.

*Jack Hetrick*

—Jack Hetrick, Network Director



## About our mailing list

We make every effort to ensure our mailing lists are accurate. If you have questions or would like to be added to or deleted from the list, let us know. Please include your entire address. To make a change, you *must* mail the mailing panel to:

*Veterans' Health*

VA Healthcare System of Ohio Network Office

11500 Northlake Drive, Suite 200

Cincinnati, OH 45249

*Veterans' Health* is online at [www.visn10.va.gov](http://www.visn10.va.gov). Visit this site to view back issues or subscribe.

## Facility inspections planned

The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) will conduct an unannounced triennial accreditation survey of all VHA facilities. Additionally, a one-day unannounced survey may occur at any time.

The purpose of these surveys is to evaluate the organization's compliance with nationally established JCAHO standards. The survey results will be used to determine whether and the conditions under which accreditation should be awarded to the organization. JCAHO standards deal with organization quality, safety-of-care issues and the safety of the environment in which care is provided.

Anyone believing that he or she has pertinent and valid information about such matters may contact JCAHO by phone at **800-994-6610**, by e-mail at [complaint@jcaho.org](mailto:complaint@jcaho.org) or by writing to:

Division on Accreditation Operations

Office of Quality Monitoring

Joint Commission on Accreditation of  
Healthcare Organizations

1 Renaissance Blvd.

Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181

VHA facilities will not take any disciplinary or retaliatory action because an employee reports safety or quality-of-care concerns to JCAHO.

*Veterans' Health* is published quarterly as a patient education service by VA Healthcare System of Ohio, one of the 21 integrated networks of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The publication is intended to provide information to help you stay well, manage your healthcare and learn about the many health services available through VA. This publication is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, which should be obtained from your doctor. All articles may be reproduced for educational purposes.

### The Mission of VA Healthcare System of Ohio is:

- To provide veterans a continuum of care that is accessible, value-added and cost-effective, and of the highest quality, within an environment of outstanding education and research.
- To promote a culture that supports and develops a caring, compassionate, competent and quality-oriented workforce.

### *Veterans' Health* Editorial Directors

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# New Veterans ID Cards

## Protecting privacy, ensuring service

**VA** is providing new Veterans Identification Cards (VICs). The new cards protect your privacy and sensitive information. The new cards will no longer show your Social Security number or birth date on the front. Only veterans eligible for VA medical benefits will receive the card, which has:

- a new modern, patriotic design
  - limited veteran information to ensure and promote privacy
  - a larger, enhanced color photo
  - positive identification for visits to VA medical centers
  - bar-code scanning capability
  - magnetic swipe capability
- Stop by your local VA Healthcare System of



Ohio medical center to have your picture taken for the new VIC. To ensure you receive your new VIC within five to seven business days, verify that the facility has your correct address on file. If the U.S. Postal Service can't deliver the card to you, it will be returned to the facility where you requested it. If you're concerned about the status of your new card, contact your local VA medical center for assistance or call the Health Benefits Service Center at **1-877-222-VETS (8387)**. **VH**

## How to register for My HealtheVet

**W**e're glad you're using My HealtheVet (MHV) to store your personal health record information. We hope you find the site valuable in managing your healthcare. New additions to the site include viewing your prescription names and eventually key portions of your medical record.

Privacy laws require that you come to the hospital and meet with the Release of Information (ROI) department to verify your identity and sign a form allowing the hospital to release your records to the system.

### Before you can be authenticated, you must:

- register on the MHV Web site
- www.myhealth.va.gov** and view the 12 minute MHV



orientation video on the Web site

- read and sign the MHV Special Consent and Participation Form
- present identification and be physically proofed by the ROI staff

If you need more information about My HealtheVet in-person authentication, please contact the Release of Information office at your local VA facility. **VH**

# Working together for your health

VA wants to be partners in your healthcare



Your doctors and nurses want to be sure you understand your medicines, treatments, tests and activities. It may help if you write down the questions to ask before each visit. Use the form on the next page or the one in your *Healthwise for Life* book.

**3 Watch for problems and be involved in solving them.** Describe your symptoms and/or pain clearly. Write down things that aren't normal and keep a list of questions between visits.

**4 Follow your treatment plan.** Ask for a list of all medicines you should take at home. Ask if there are any foods, drinks or activities you should avoid. Ask for written directions and ask questions if anything is unclear.

**5 Know who to contact if you have a problem.** Ask who you should call if you have side effects or other problems.

## Managing chronic diseases

Research shows the more patients know about their diseases, the better able they are to take steps to manage them. As a result, they're healthier and enjoy a better quality of life. You can manage chronic conditions and maintain good health by:

- achieving and maintaining a healthy weight (ask for a referral to the MOVE! program)
- trying to exercise at least 30 minutes every day—it doesn't have to be all at one time
- quitting smoking or using any tobacco products
- taking your medicine as prescribed
- following a healthy diet that is low in fat, salt and sugar (if you need more advice, ask to talk to a dietitian)

Some health problems will require that you take certain actions:

- If you have high blood pressure, check and record your blood pressure at the same time each day.
- If you have heart failure, weigh yourself at the same time every day. If you gain 2 to 3 pounds or

**T**aking an active role in your healthcare can help you stay healthy and maintain your quality of life. If you're living with a chronic disease such as diabetes, heart disease or high blood pressure, it's even more important for you to work with your healthcare team to develop a plan for disease self-management. Self-management means that you're an active partner in taking care of yourself and doing the things that will help you stay healthy. To get started, follow this five-step process:

**1 Take part in decisions about your treatment.**

Know which provider or team is in charge of your care. Know what tests you need and make sure you understand before you consent to any test.

**2 Find out about your condition.** Ask questions.



more in one day or more than 5 pounds in one week, call your VA health care provider.

- If you have diabetes, monitor your blood sugar as recommended by your doctor.

### Calling your provider

Often, a phone call is all you need to manage a problem at home or find out if you need to make an appointment. Here's how to get the most from your call:

- **Prepare for your call.** Write down one sentence that describes your problem, a list of the symptoms you have, such as fever, pain, etc., and two or three questions you have about the problems. Have your list ready for your call and have your calendar handy in case you need to make an appointment.

- **Leave a clear message.** Repeat the sentence that describes your problem to the person who answers and ask to talk with your provider. If your provider isn't available, call the Tele-Nurse at **1-888-838-6446**. A registered nurse will take your call seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

- **Follow through.** Briefly describe your problem and symptoms and ask your questions. **VH**

## Prevent deadly drug interactions

VA program keeps tabs on your medications to keep you safe

**M**anaging a chronic disease often means taking more than one medicine. To help keep you safe, VA's computerized medical records system keeps track of your medicines and checks for combinations that might be harmful.

"When you fill a prescription at a VA pharmacy, the computer automatically reviews your medicines to prevent harmful drug interactions," says Julie West, Pharm.D., Clinical Pharmacy Specialist at Chillicothe VA Medical Center. "It's important to tell your doctor or pharmacist about all the other medicines you take, including over-the-counter drugs, herbs or prescriptions from non-VA providers."

For example, you may be taking the same medicine in both generic and brand name formulas, or you may be taking an herb that interferes with one of your medicines. That's why, even though VA pharmacies cannot fill prescriptions written by non-VA providers, it is still important to report these prescriptions to your VA doctor and pharmacist.

## Clip and save

Be prepared for your next doctor's appointment. Fill out this form and bring it with you to the clinic.

### Make the most of your visit

Do you have concerns you need to discuss today about . . .

- ☐ Your family or living situation that might affect your healthcare
- ☐ Anxiety/fears about your condition or treatment
- ☐ Medications or medication side effects
- ☐ Tests or test results
- ☐ Your plan of care
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Next steps for care checklist

Before you leave today, be sure you have been given and understand:

#### Your medicines and treatments

- ☐ Instructions and directions for use
- ☐ Side effects, benefits and risks
- ☐ Changes in medications and treatments
- ☐ Reason for medications and treatments

#### Notes

#### Problems

- ☐ What to do if you have a problem
- ☐ Who to call if you have a problem

#### Notes

#### Tests (if ordered)

- ☐ Why tests have been ordered
- ☐ How and when tests will be scheduled
- ☐ When test results will be available
- ☐ How to find out about test results

#### Notes

#### Follow-up care

Next clinic appointment: \_\_\_\_\_  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Don't  
let good  
intentions  
get forgotten**

# Stay motivated!

**D**id you make a New Year's resolution to adopt a healthier lifestyle? Are you sticking with it? If you are, congratulations! If not, you're not alone. By spring, the majority of resolutions have fallen by the wayside. The good news, however, is that you can get back on track at any time.

The first step is to set realistic goals. Aim for a healthy body, not one that conforms to the media's image of thinness and beauty that's virtually impossible for most people to attain or

maintain. How you feel physically, the strength of your relationships and your personal growth and self-esteem will sustain you through life far better than the ability to look super in a swimsuit.

Next, recognize that someone else's plan won't necessarily suit you. Identify ways that you can best overcome obstacles. If you need to eat better, lose pounds or improve your general fitness, take time to develop a practical plan that you can win with because it meets your personal needs.

Use the determination you've shown in former achievements to commit to the plan. Think consistency and moderation in your exercise and eating habits. Remember the moral of "The Tortoise and the Hare": "Slow and steady wins the race."

## **Small steps, big results**

Embarking on a new diet can be an overwhelming task, but it doesn't have to be. Start by making small changes and build on them. Pick one of the following goals for this week and add another each week:

- Keep a food journal to help you see where changes can be made.
- Replace white bread, rice and pasta with whole wheat or whole grain varieties.
- Aim to eat more fruits and vegetables every day.
- Eat slowly and savor your food.
- Stop eating when you are satisfied, not stuffed.
- Drink a glass of water before every meal.
- Replace sugary drinks and alcoholic beverages with water or diet sodas.
- Remove high-calorie snack food from your cupboards. Keep healthy snacks on hand instead.
- Choose baked, broiled, steamed or grilled foods instead of fried foods.

- Plan meals and snacks ahead of time.
- Schedule two or three exercise sessions a week.

## Change your thinking, change your life!

What you think drives what you do. By changing your attitude, you have the power to change your life. Here's how:

- Make a firm decision to get serious.
- Make your weight management program one of your top priorities.
- Realize that you have control over your weight.
- Remember that eating and other lifestyle behaviors are learned, and therefore can be changed.
- Think positively. Whenever a negative thought comes to mind, counteract it with a positive thought.
- Tell yourself you're worth the effort.
- Think of eating and physical activity as needing balance. You have the power to tip the scales.
- Reward yourself often for achieving small goals.
- Be kind to yourself through all the ups and downs of your weight-loss efforts. **VH**



## He walked off 100 pounds!

In 2006, Dave "T-Bird" Dundr set a goal to lose weight. "I looked at the calendar and said, 'If I lose two pounds a week, I can lose 100 pounds this year,'" he says. He not only met his goal, he exceeded it and lost 112 pounds in 10 months. "Some weeks I lost and some weeks I gained, but I kept going."

The 56-year-old Cleveland veteran walked 2,803 miles last year—"the distance from here to California, and then some," he says.

A former truck driver, Dundr knows the mileage between cities. Every day, he'd log his distance and add it up to determine his latest destination.

"I'd call my sister and say, 'I made it to Kansas City,' or 'I made it to Texas,'" he says. "I had blisters upon blisters from walking so much."

In addition to going from 292 pounds to 180 pounds, the 5-foot-10-inch Dundr lowered his blood pressure and cholesterol, reducing or eliminating his need for certain medicines.

His advice for other veterans: Every little bit helps. "When I started walking, I could only go about a mile and a half," he says. "But I kept at it and worked my way up to 25 miles some days. If you start with a little, it will add up."



**Dave Dundr walked 2,803 miles last year and lost 112 pounds.**

## Bury the habit: A 5-step plan

There's no question that old habits can die hard. By replacing old habits with new ones, you can achieve success. The following five-step plan can help whether you're trying to lose weight, quit smoking or make other lifestyle changes:

**1 Become aware of your actions.** When you

realize what you're doing, you can change it.

**2 Keep a record.** If you write down what you want to change and the action steps you plan to take, you're more likely to make it happen.

**3 Post reminders.** Put them on the refrigerator, the bathroom mirror, the kitchen table, your night stand and steering wheel.

Constant reminders of your goal and your plan to achieve it will breed success.

**4 Avoid triggers.** In 12-step programs, members are advised to stay away from people, places and

things that trigger their addiction. The same advice applies when changing any habit.

**5 Keep at it.** If at first you don't succeed, don't give up. Practice makes permanent!



# Reaching us is easy

Keep this information handy—when you need us, we'll be there.

## **Chillicothe VAMC**

17273 State Route 104  
Chillicothe, OH 45601  
740-773-1141

## **Community-Based Outpatient Clinics**

### **Athens**

510 West Union Street  
Athens, OH 45701  
740-593-7314

### **Cambridge**

2145 Southgate  
Cambridge, OH 43725  
740-432-1963

### **Lancaster**

1550 Sheridan Drive, Suite 100  
Colonnade Medical Building  
Lancaster, OH 43130  
740-653-6145

### **Marietta**

418 Colegate Drive  
Marietta, OH 45750  
740-568-0412

### **Portsmouth**

621 Broadway Street  
Portsmouth, OH 45662  
740-353-3236

## **Cincinnati VAMC**

3200 Vine Street  
Cincinnati, OH 45220  
513-861-3100

## **Ft. Thomas VA Campus**

1000 So. Ft. Thomas Avenue  
Ft. Thomas, KY 41075  
859-572-6202

## **Community-Based Outpatient Clinics**

### **Bellevue**

103 Landmark Drive  
Bellevue, KY 41073  
859-392-3840

## **Clermont County**

Eastgate Professional  
Office Park  
4355 Ferguson Drive, Suite 270  
Cincinnati, OH 45245  
513-943-3680

## **Dearborn County**

1600 Flossie Drive  
Greendale IN 47025  
812-539-2313

## **Florence, KY**

7711 Ewing Blvd.  
Florence, KY 41042  
859-282-4480

## **Louis Stokes Wade Park VAMC**

10701 East Boulevard  
Cleveland, OH 44106  
216-791-3800

## **Brecksville VA Medical Center**

10000 Brecksville Road  
Brecksville, OH 44141  
440-526-3030

## **Community-Based Outpatient Clinics**

### **Akron**

55 West Waterloo  
Akron, OH 44319  
330-724-7715

### **Canton**

733 Market Avenue South  
Canton, OH 44702  
330-489-4600

### **East Liverpool**

Oglivie Square  
15655 State Route 170  
Circleville, OH 43920  
330-386-4303

### **Lorain**

205 West 20th Street  
Lorain, OH 44052  
440-244-3833

## **Mansfield**

1456 Park Avenue West  
Mansfield, OH 44906  
419-529-4602

## **McCafferty**

4242 Lorain Avenue  
Cleveland, OH 44113  
216-939-0699

## **New Philadelphia**

1260 Monroe Avenue, #15H  
New Philadelphia, OH 44663  
330-602-5339

## **Painesville**

7 West Jackson Street  
Painesville, OH 44077  
440-357-6740

## **Ravenna**

6751 North Chestnut Street  
Ravenna, OH 44266  
330-296-3641

## **Sandusky**

3416 Columbus Avenue  
Sandusky, OH 44870  
419-625-7350

## **Warren**

Riverside Square  
1400 Tod Avenue NW  
Warren, OH 44485  
330-392-0311

## **Youngstown**

2031 Belmont Avenue  
Youngstown, OH 44505  
330-740-9200

## **Chalmers P. Wylie Outpatient Clinic**

543 Taylor Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43203  
614-257-5200

## **Community-Based Outpatient Clinics**

### **Grove City**

1953 Ohio Avenue  
Grove City, OH 43123  
614-257-8800

### **Marion**

1203 Delaware Avenue  
Marion, OH 43302  
740-223-8089

### **Newark**

1912 Tamarack Rd.  
Newark, OH 43055  
740-788-8329

### **Zanesville**

840 Bethesda Drive  
Building 3A  
Zanesville, OH 43701  
740-453-7725

## **Dayton VAMC**

4100 West Third Street  
Dayton, OH 45428  
937-268-6511

## **Community-Based Outpatient Clinics**

### **Lima**

1303 Bellefontaine Avenue  
Lima, OH 45804  
419-222-5788

### **Middletown**

675 North University Boulevard  
Middletown, OH 45042  
513-423-8387

### **Richmond**

4351 South A Street  
Richmond, IN 47374  
765-973-6915

### **Springfield**

512 South Burnett Road  
Springfield, OH 45505  
937-328-3385

Call Tele-Nurse at 1-888-838-6446. • Visit us online at [www.visn10.va.gov](http://www.visn10.va.gov)

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